



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

House of Representatives

24 Beacon Street

State House, Boston, MA 02133

LINDSAY N. SABADOSA

State Representative

1st Hampshire District

Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge St, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02214
January 31, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

As a strong advocate for environmental sustainability, I write to express my support for the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program, a crucial initiative for achieving the climate goals of Western Massachusetts through substantial solar investment.

I support the inclusion of question 1, which aims to identify incentives and projects that should be prioritized, while considering the necessary balance between land use, equity, and economic considerations.

I have seen question 1's relevance in the projects occurring in my district. As you are undoubtedly aware, my district is actively engaged in trying to balance protecting our green space and forestland, while also developing solar and other renewable energy. Given the way our current incentives work, large-scale solar projects generally need to be built on large parcels of undeveloped land, which can cause negative environmental impacts. At current development patterns, our state stands to lose 1.2 million acres to solar development by 2050, 9,400 to 22,800 acres of that being farmland and high biodiversity lands.

There is a need to identify the incentives that would be necessary to offset the cost of building solar developments on previously existing structures, such as parking lot canopies and large-scale solar projects in built environments. A report by Mass Audubon and Harvard Forest found that it is possible to avert a serious loss of land and meet the state's 27-gigawatt goal by limiting development to 94,000 acres if small-scale solar development is ramped up to an appropriate scale in urban landscape, such as rooftops, parking lots, golf courses, and more.

Question 8, focusing on solar canopy projects, is significant because it can identify and finance a broader range of smaller-scale solar projects that utilize existing infrastructures, thus minimizing the need to use undeveloped land. I think having a question dedicated to solar canopies is extremely positive because they are the prime example of how we can utilize pre-existing structures to their full potential and save undeveloped land from being used for solar projects.

Question 12, regarding consumer protections for low-income customers, is important because SMART funding has failed low-income customers in the past. SMART funding was originally allocated with the assumption that the costs of solar would decrease, but supply chain issues during the pandemic resulted in the program not providing sufficient funds for low-income customers. This question would allow people to share their solutions to this problem, with one potential solution being SMART funding being tied to the market price for solar.

Thank you for taking these comments into consideration and I look forward to continuing to work with DOER. Your work and partnership are deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lindsay N. Sabadosa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lindsay" being more prominent and the last name "Sabadosa" following in a similar style.

Lindsay N. Sabadosa
State Representative, 1st Hampshire